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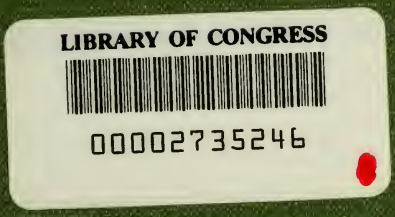

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THE UNITED STATES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

SYLLABUS OF A COURSE OF SIX LECTURE-STUDIES

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EXERCISES

Topics for exercises are given at the end of the outline of each lecture. Answers in writing, to not more than two questions each week, are invited from all persons attending the lecture. These should be written on one side of the paper only, a broad margin being reserved on the left. The name of the centre, with some signature of the writer, should stand at the top of the first page. The exercises should be sent to F. W. Shepardson, Ph.D., The University of Chicago, Chicago, so as to arrive at least two days before the following lecture. They will be returned at the REVIEW, the following week, with such marginal and oral comments as they seem to require. If application is made to the lecturer, there will be an EXAMINATION at the end of the course for students who are qualified and desire to take it.

Any of the books referred to in these lectures may be obtained at special rates from THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, Chicago, Ill. Prices will be quoted on application.

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Readings in connection with each lecture are designated in the syllabus. The syllabus is provided with a perforated leaf upon which each student doing the full amount of assigned reading, or in addition to the reading, rendering to the lecturer the full number of written papers, is invited to record that fact. This leaf may be sent by the student to the lecturer who will certify to it by his signature, and will add such comments as he thinks appropriate. The leaf will then be returned by the lecturer to the student.

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LECTURE I.

THE UNITED STATES A CENTURY AGO.

I. **Introduction—The Point of View.**

In a study of American development during a century, the importance of the point of view cannot be overestimated. There is great difficulty in securing the right one, owing—

1. To confusion of present conditions with past.
2. To confusion caused by the halo of the "glorious past."
3. To confusion caused by the vaunting American spirit.

An examination of conditions prevailing at the beginning is the only satisfactory method of securing the preparation needed for a correct appreciation of the progress of our country during a hundred years. Such examination would require study of (1) The Land, (2) The People, and (3) The Ideas of the People.

II. **The Geography of the United States in 1800.**

1. The boundaries of the country.
2. Physiographical features in relation to the history.
3. The relation of the territory outlined upon the map to the portion actually occupied.
4. The relation of the territory to that of European nations.
5. Geographical problems.
   a. External, relating to boundaries.
   b. Internal, relating to the Public Domain and the State Domain.

III. **The Population of the United States in 1800.**

1. Number.
2. Origin.
3. Location.
4. Social condition.
5. Economic condition.
6. Political condition.

IV. **The Dominant Political Ideas of 1800.**

1. The ideas of the Federalist element.
2. The ideas of the Democratic element.
3. The relation of the state to the Union.
4. The relation of the United States to the world.

V. **Conclusion.**

References:

Walker (editor), *The First Century of the Republic.*
Gannett, *The Building of a Nation.*
McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II, 538–582.
Scudder, *Men and Manners in America a Hundred Years Ago.*
Schouler, *History of the United States.*
Shaler (editor), *The United States of America.*
Hart, *American History Told by Contemporaries*, Vol. III, "National Expansion."
Sparks, *The Expansion of the American People.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR REVIEW.

1. What flaws were there in the boundaries of the United States in 1800?
2. What was the strength of the bond of union in 1800?
3. Make an argument from the European point of view showing that the United States would be short-lived.
4. How did the social ideas of Alexander Hamilton differ from those of Thomas Jefferson?

LECTURE II.

THE EXPANSION OF THE UNION.

I. **Introduction.**

In 1800 "the Union" meant an aggregation of separate states, recently colonies, having strongly developed local traditions, and but little more than a tendency to centralization.

II. **The Louisiana Purchase.**

The purchase of the Louisiana country was a revolutionary measure, completely altering the geographical aspect of the United States, suggesting grave constitutional questions, and promising ultimate destruction of the political power of the states, to which past history and tradition had conceded leadership. With its development old-time questions were forgotten and new problems pressed for solution, the narrow and the insular giving place to the broad and the national. The purchase of such a magnificent territory at such trifling cost was an achievement little appreciated at the time.

III. **The Florida Purchase.**

The theory of "manifest destiny" was well illustrated in the case of Florida, the actual value of the territorial acquisition being small compared with the possibilities suggested by the "line of 1819."

IV. **Texas and the Mexican Cessions.**

A disturbing element was introduced when the fight came for Texas, leading directly to the Mexican war. The imperative demands of slavery were met by the development of an intense spirit of moral earnestness, the theory of "manifest destiny," and the watchcry, "Our country! right or wrong," arguments of a triumphant and imperious majority, being brought into sharp contradistinction to the idea of an individual responsibility on the part of the citizen.

V. **The Oregon Contest.**

The rousing sentiment "Fifty-Four-Forty-or-Fight!" was no doubt a clever device to attract public attention from the more important struggle in the Southwest, but the settlement of the northwestern boundary was of great importance in connection with the Pacific ocean frontage and the internal development of the country, and, as later events proved, in connection with the discovery of gold in California. The influence of John Quincy Adams cannot be overestimated.

VI. **The Alaska Purchase.**

This introduced an entirely new question: the desirability of the acquisition of territory not geographically contiguous to the United States. Its far-reaching importance was not realized at the time, the recompensing of a friendly power having more weight than the influence of world-problems as yet unseen.

VII. **Recent Territorial Acquisitions.**

The annexation of the Hawaiian Islands and the territorial results of the Spanish-American war bringing Porto Rico and the Philippine Islands under American control introduced new phases of "expansion."

VIII. **Conclusion.**

The expansion of the Union in point of territory is only one form of true expansion. Widening of geographical limits necessitated broadening of view everywhere, and inevitably led to more comprehensive ideas of the true meaning of "the Union."

References:

Walker (editor), *The First Century of the Republic.*
Gannett, *The Building of a Nation.*
Shaler (editor), *The United States of America.*
Sparks, *The Expansion of the American People.*
Morse, *Thomas Jefferson.*
Morse, *John Quincy Adams.*
Barrows, *Oregon.*
Fiske, *American Political Ideas.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR REVIEW.

1. What were the constitutional objections to the Louisiana purchase? What was the attitude of Jefferson toward them?
2. What substantial gains were there resulting from the Florida purchase?
3. Can more be said in support of the attitude of the United States toward Mexico 1840–48 than against it?
4. What were the several steps in the determination of the boundary between the United States and British North America, 1783–1872?

LECTURE III.

THE INFLUENCE OF CENTRALIZING IDEAS.

I. Introduction.

A pressing danger forced the American colonies into a temporary alliance in the Revolutionary War, the tendency toward union being strong or weak as the common enemy threatened or seemed distant. "The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union" made only a "rope of sand," and the constitution of the United States, "wrung from the grinding necessities of a reluctant people," was not a sufficient binding obligation without certain great centralizing forces.

II. The Influence of Alexander Hamilton.

" . . . . Hamilton's theory of government seems to have been almost entirely founded upon what had passed under his own observation during the war of the Revolution, and subsequently previous to the adoption of the new constitution . . . . he had become very strongly impressed with the impossibility of duly providing for the public good, especially in times of war and danger, except by a government invested with ample powers, and possessing means for putting those powers into vigorous exercise."

His whole influence was toward centralization, his various political and financial measures being calculated to establish the credit of the United States and to give it distinct standing among the nations of the world.

III. The Influence of John Marshall.

Following the work of Alexander Hamilton in helping to frame the constitution and then to make it an effective organ for government came that of John Marshall, who directed the Supreme Court, asserting its jurisdiction in the settlement of mooted questions, defining and maintaining the powers of Congress, defending the authority of the executive, and limiting the powers of the individual states; this constructive work of the

Supreme Court being a powerful influence toward centralization and the upbuilding of the United States as an entity, distinct from the notion of an aggregation of loosely allied states.

IV. **The Influence of Territorial Expansion.**

Each new accession of territory, making an addition to the public domain and providing for a population which had had no share in colonial history and hence no interest in the jealousies incident to state rights, was a powerful force toward centralization.

V. **The Influence of War and Diplomacy.**

The second war with England had great influence in stimulating national pride, the achievements of the navy, especially, increasing the desire for a strong central government, whose flag should be honored everywhere. In the Civil War the love of the Union was made the important element in the appeal for supporters of the government, and the result of this war was everywhere considered to be the downfall of the state-rights principle and the triumph of the centralizing idea. Wherever in American history our representatives met commissioners from other nations the desire for a strong central government was greatly stimulated.

VI. **The Influence of Modern Inventions.**

All of these centralizing influences combined could not have overcome the decentralizing effect of the rapid territorial expansion, had it not been for the invention and development of the railroad and the telegraph which abridged distance and brought the remotest parts of the country into close relationships.

References:

Sparks, *The Expansion of the American People.*
Gannett, *The Building of a Nation.*
Lodge, *Alexander Hamilton.*
Magruder, *John Marshall.*
Morse, *John Quincy Adams.*
Pellew, *John Jay.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR REVIEW.

1. What influence did the first and second banks of the United States have toward centralization?
2. Give cases in diplomatic history showing the weakness of the position of American representatives because of the lack of a strong central government.
3. Show in some detail how the second war with England affected the development of the central government.
4. What was the influence of Daniel Webster upon centralization?

LECTURE IV.

CERTAIN PROBLEMS OF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT.

I. Introduction.

The spectacular element in history ordinarily is emphasized while real, substantial growth comes in the slow and steady internal development. The wars of the republic, or its marvelous territorial expansion, are more attractive than the details of quiet improvement. A few problems of internal development afford abundant opportunity for interesting study.

II. The Admission of New States.

The constitutional provision for the admission of new states into the Union was a very peculiar one, permitting the gradual introduction of an element strange to past history and tradition, and leading eventually to the overthrow of the long-established political power of certain states, and to the entire revolution of governmental ideas. The maintenance of a balance between North and South was long sought.

III. The Indian Problem.

Two entirely distinct notions respecting the Indians often came into sharp antagonism — the philanthropic, viewing the red man afar off; and the practical, seeing him as an undesirable

neighbor. The Indian problem was an ever-present one in many places, and its solution, often forced by angry whites, was frequently attended with wrong.

IV. **The Public Lands.**

The great increase in the public domain made the question of the disposition of the public lands an important one. The possibility of finding a home at comparatively small cost proved a wonderful stimulus to immigration and to an internal movement of population. The value of provisions for making many homeowners cannot be overestimated as a force in the upbuilding of the United States.

V. **Internal Improvements.**

The lack of means of communication had been one of the weaknesses of every early plan of union. The feeling was quite strong that the possession of so much territory would secure the failure of the American experiment. The vast acquisitions of new territory, the inevitable currents of popular migration, and the necessities of war, all forced the importance of the problem of internal improvements, the proposition to make these at government expense being naturally assailed by the advocates of state rights as essentially centralizing.

VI. **The Growth of Urban Population.**

In 1790 there were six cities in the United States which had a population of 8,000 or more, and the largest contained only 42,520. In 1900 there were more than seventy with over 50,000. The tremendous growth of urban population has been one of the wonders of the century, and has introduced many new and grave problems for solution.

References:

Sparks, *The Expansion of the American People.*
Schurz, *Henry Clay.*
Sumner, *Andrew Jackson.*
Dunn, *Indiana.*
King, *Ohio.*
Loomis, *Modern Cities.*
Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR REVIEW.

1. What effect upon the character of the United States did the admission of Ohio have?
2. Under what conditions were the southern Indians moved to the Indian Territory?
3. What things determined the price asked for public lands?
4. Show why the Strict-Construction party naturally opposed internal improvements.
5. Indicate seven or eight important problems connected with any modern great city.

LECTURE V.

THE STRUGGLE WITH DECENTRALIZING FORCES.

I. **The Influence of Colonial Ideas and Traditions.**

The influence of colonial ideas in the formative days of the republic was largely in the direction of decentralization, and those in charge of the administration had to make a hard fight to overcome the sinister forces.

II. **The Strict-Construction Party.**

The party of opposition to men like Hamilton and Marshall found a sure refuge in the constitution. While struggling to maintain its principles, the Strict Constructionists worked against centralization and in favor of the power of the states.

III. **Nullification.**

The idea of nullification was the extreme limit of opposition. It found advocates on many occasions, but certain notable ones are recalled to illustrate its influence as a decentralizing force.

IV. **The Slave Power.**

The decentralizing influence of the slavery question was very great, the increasing bitter discussions of its various phases

leading to the introduction of the moral element, and arraying one part of the people against the other, each conscious of rectitude and possessed of a feeling of personal wrong on the part of the other. State rights furnished a shelter for the advocates of slavery, and they felt the imperative need to struggle constantly against the forces tending toward centralization.

V. **Rebellion and Civil War.**

The supreme issue was joined in the Civil War. It was "union" against "disunion." The forces of decentralization combined in the arena of last resort, until victory came for the Union.

VI. **The Problem of Reconstruction.**

Even in the hour of decisive victory the gravest difficulties were encountered in the reorganizations following the war, as if the decentralizing influences were still effective against the national government.

References:

Sumner, *Alexander Hamilton.*
Morse, *Thomas Jefferson.*
Von Holst, *John C. Calhoun.*
Morse, *Abraham Lincoln.*
Storey, *Charles Sumner.*
Wilson, *Division and Reunion.*
Hart, *American History Told by Contemporaries*, Vol. IV, "Welding the Nation."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR REVIEW.

1. What were the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions?
2. What decentralizing elements were illustrated in the Whiskey Insurrection of 1794?
3. What argument can be made in support of the theories of John C. Calhoun?
4. What was Abraham Lincoln's position regarding the governmental relation of the rebellious states? Was secession ever a fact?

LECTURE VI.

THE UNITED STATES AS A WORLD-POWER.

I. **Isolation, the Idea of the Fathers.**

The American colonists had largely come seeking a refuge from oppression, political or religious, and their natural desires favored isolation of the United States, except as commercial interests suggested foreign connections.

II. **Neutrality.**

"Friendship with all, entangling alliances with none," was Jefferson's expression for the ideas set forth by Washington in his Neutrality Proclamation of 1793, and reiterated in his Farewell Address.

III. **Lessons of the War of 1812.**

Until 1815 the United States was a dependency of Europe, its people divided into British and French factions, its policies determined only after careful consideration of European opinion. One great effect of the war was to free the country from this feeling and to stimulate the idea of nationality.

IV. **The Monroe Doctrine.**

The Monroe doctrine in its three parts had comparatively little force at the time of its declaration, but it made the people feel their strength, and accustomed them to the idea of the United States as a world-power. The proposition of the British in connection with the Holy Alliance.

V. **Manifest Destiny.**

The idea of manifest destiny had its value in creating the impression that the United States was destined to be one of the great nations of the world, and in preparing people for geographical changes. It had evil elements also.

VI. **Lessons of the Spanish-American War.**

The Spanish-American war, with its results of American ownership of the Philippine Islands and Porto Rico, and American oversight of Cuba, together with the contemporary acquisition of the Hawaiian Islands, marked the end of the isolation idea of the fathers and the forced entrance of the United States into world politics.

VII. **Problems of the Future.**

a. The Atlantic-Pacific canal.
b. The Cuban situation.
c. The control of the Philippines.
d. The government of the colonies.
e. The control of Americans.

References:

Lodge, *George Washington.*
Morse, *Thomas Jefferson.*
Pellew, *John Jay.*
Gilman, *James Monroe.*
Morse, *John Quincy Adams.*
Austin, *Colonial Administration.*
Fiske, *American Political Ideas.*
Sparks, *Expansion of the American People.*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR REVIEW.

1. Was there any difference between the ideas held by Washington and Jefferson on neutrality?
2. What was the occasion for the declaration of the Monroe doctrine? What is its exact position as a principle of international law?
3. What argument may be made for the withdrawal of the United States authority from the Philippine Islands?
4. Would the United States be justified in seizing Cuba in case of a failure of self-control?

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